

# EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

FREEDOM FOR RICARDO SEVERINO  
GONZALEZ ALFONSO

**HON. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 28, 2004*

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about Ricardo Severino Gonzalez Alfonso, a political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

Mr. Gonzalez is the president of the Manuel Marquez Sterling Journalists Society and an independent reporter in totalitarian Cuba. Mr. Gonzalez works and writes to inform the world about the gross human rights abuses that occur every day under the repressive regime of the Cuban dictator.

Unfortunately, writing and reporting the truth is not allowed under Castro's tyrannical dictatorship. All attempts to portray the absolute lack of freedom in totalitarian Cuba are viciously condemned and their authors are imprisoned or exiled. Mr. Gonzalez has been harassed by Castro's thugs since 1997, and on March 18, 2003, he was arrested for his insistence on publishing the truth about Castro's totalitarian Cuba.

The sham trial verdict that sentenced Mr. Gonzalez to 20 years in the Cuban gulag read:

"... he managed to get his articles, which were subversive and misleading in nature with regard to the Cuban system, published in various newspapers and magazines such as *Reporters Without Borders*."

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Gonzalez was 53 years old when he was condemned to 20 years in Castro's gulag. The conditions in the Cuban totalitarian gulag are so atrocious as to almost guarantee that Mr. Gonzalez will not walk out if he were to have to serve the entirety of his sham sentence. Let me be very clear, Mr. Gonzalez has been sentenced to die in the gulag by the Cuban tyrant for writing the truth about Castro's brutal, repressive regime. It is imperative that Cuba be free as soon as possible, so that Mr. Gonzalez and all the political prisoners can also live in the freedom and dignity that they deserve.

My colleagues, we must cry out for the release of all those who languish in dungeons because they believe in human rights and freedom. We must demand the immediate release of Ricardo Gonzalez Alfonso and every political prisoner.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. JIM DeMINT**

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 28, 2004*

Mr. DeMINT. Mr. Speaker, I was absent during roll call vote 6; had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

HONORING THE STUDENTS OF  
POLK CREEK ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL

**HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO**

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 28, 2004*

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the fourth grade class at Polk Creek Elementary School in Weston, West Virginia. These students in Mrs. Mary Wagoner's class recorded a CD entitled "Thinking of You" for distribution to the 100 Lewis County, West Virginia, residents serving our country in Iraq.

The students performed the songs "Thinking of You," "Allegiance Rap," "You Are Our Heroes," "The West Virginia Hills," "American Tears" and "Mighty United" for our soldiers.

All of us in this House share the sentiments expressed by these students. The men and women serving our country in Iraq are in the thoughts and prayers of us all. Hearing from these school children will improve the morale of our troops and show them they are in the thoughts of people back home.

I would like to thank Principal Thomas Garrett, Teacher Mary Wagoner, along with Whitney Ballard and Shaun Davis, for their hard work with the students at Polk Creek Elementary on this project. I am honored to represent the Lewis County community and thank Polk Creek Elementary for their efforts to honor our military personnel.

THE ROBERT J. DOLE COMMUNITY  
CENTER

**HON. TODD TIAHRT**

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 28, 2004*

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing legislation to authorize the Secretary of the Air Force to rename the community center at McConnell Air Force Base, currently known as "Emerald City," as "The Robert J. Dole Community Center." I would like to thank my colleagues from Kansas, Mr. Ryun, Mr. Moran and Mr. Moore, for agreeing to join as original cosponsors of the bill.

Senator Dole once said that his life "is proof that America is a land without limits." He was born in Russell, Kansas, on July 22, 1923, the eldest son of Doran R. and Bina Talbott Dole. He graduated from Russell public schools and attended the University of Kansas, Lawrence, entering in the fall of 1941. He received an A.B. and LL.B from Washburn Municipal University in 1952.

Senator Dole entered active duty in the U.S. Army in June 1943 after completing his sophomore year at the University of Kansas. He served 5½ years in World War II and was a 10th Mountain Division platoon leader in the Allied liberation of Northern Italy. During this time, he was twice wounded and twice deco-

rated for "heroic achievement," and was discharged with the rank of Captain in July 1948, having convalesced for 3 years from grave wounds sustained in combat.

In 1950, he was elected to the Kansas Legislature and served for 2 years before being elected Russell County Attorney, a position he served in for 8 years. In 1960, he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives and reelected in 1962, 1964 and 1966. He was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1968 and was reelected in 1974, 1980, 1986 and 1992.

One of the many lasting contributions that Bob Dole made to the State of Kansas and to the American people was the manner in which he worked to strengthen McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita over the course of his nearly 4 decades of service in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.

Due largely to his efforts, infrastructure improvements at the base have included a base hospital, housing for single officers and enlisted personnel, and a multifaceted community center, "Emerald City," which contains a bowling center, officer and enlisted clubs, a fitness center and a cafeteria.

In honor of Senator Dole's service to Kansas and to the men and women who have called McConnell Air Force Base home, I am pleased to introduce this legislation, which authorizes the Secretary of the Air Force to rename the community center at McConnell Air Force Base, currently known as "Emerald City," as "The Robert J. Dole Community Center."

HONORING THE LIFE OF BILL L.  
KRATZ

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 28, 2004*

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I have the honor today to recognize the life of Bill L. Kratz, who unexpectedly passed away on January 25, 2004. As a husband, father, Christian, and public servant, Mr. Kratz will be missed by many.

A life-long resident of Missouri, Bill Kratz was born on May 12, 1938, in Shelbyville, Missouri. On September 17, 1961, Bill married Patricia Lohman, and they settled in Independence, Missouri. They had two children, Dana and Keith, and eight grandchildren. Mr. Kratz served in the National Guard from 1961 to 1966 and was also employed by General Motors, from which he retired in 1989. After retirement, Mr. Kratz took an active role in the community by serving on the planning commission for the city of Independence since 2000 and assisted in the 2000 census.

Mr. Kratz was also active in his church, Messiah Lutheran Church, serving as an elder, chairman of the Adult and Family Board, chairman of the Board of Social Ministry, vice president of the congregation, and president of the congregation.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.